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Friendly Advice
by Naráyana
&
King Víkrama's Adventures



Translated by
JUDIT TÖRZSÖK

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&

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PROLOGUE

0.10 **A**STI BHĀGĪRATHĪ|TĪRE Pāṭaliputra|nāma|dheyam naga-
ram. tatra sarva|svāmi|gun' |ōpetah Sudarśano nāma
nara|patir āsīt. sa bhū|patir ekadā ken' āpi paṭhyamānaṃ
śloka|dvayaṃ śuśrāva.

«an|eka|saṃśay' |ōcchedi
parokṣ' |ārthasya darśakam
sarvasya locanaṃ śāstraṃ;
yasya n' āsty, andha eva saḥ. [10]

yauvanaṃ, dhana|sampattiḥ,
prabhutvam, a|vivekitā
ek' |āikam apy an|arthāya,
kim u yatra catuṣṭayam.» [11]

ity ākarṇy' ātmanaḥ putrāṇām an|adhigata|śāstrāṇām, ni-
tyam un|mārga|gāminām śāstr' |ān|anuṣṭhānen' ōdvigna|ma-
nāḥ sa rājā cintayām āsa:

«ko 'rthaḥ putreṇa jātena
yo na vidvān na dhārmikah?
kāṇena cakṣuṣā kiṃ vā?
cakṣuḥ|pīḍ' āiva kevalam. [12]

0.15 ajāta|mṛta|mūrkhāṇām varam ādyau, na c' āntimaḥ;
sakarḍ|duḥkha|karāv ādyāv, antimas tu pade pade. [13]

kiṃ ca,

ON THE BANK of the river Ganges there is a city called Pátali-putra. A king named Handsome once lived there, possessing all the qualities a ruler should. One day he heard someone recite the following two verses: 0.10

“Learning resolves countless doubts and reveals what is beyond perception. Learning is the universal eye; without it, you are blind.

Youth, wealth, power and recklessness can each lead to disaster; all the more so when the four are combined!”

When the king heard these words, he became anxious about his sons, who had not received any instruction, always took the wrong path, and followed no good teaching. He then thought:

“What’s the use of a son if he is neither learned nor righteous?—What’s the use of a bad eye? It only causes pain.

Of an unborn, dead or stupid son, the first two would be preferable, for they cause pain only once, but the last does so at every step. 0.15

What’s more,

sa jāto yena jātena yāti vaṃśaḥ samunnatim.
parivartini saṃsāre mṛtaḥ ko vā na jāyate? [14]

guṇi|gaṇa|gaṇan'ārambhe
na patati kaṭhinī su|sambhramād yasya,
ten' āmbā yadi sutinī,
vada, vandhyā kīdrśī nāma? [15]
dāne tapasi śaurye ca yasya na prathitaṃ yaśaḥ
vidyāyām artha|lābhe ca, mātur uccāra eva saḥ. [16]

o.20 aparaṃ ca,

varam eko guṇī putro, na ca mūrkhā|śatāny api.
ekaś candras tamo hanti, na ca tārā|gaṇo 'pi ca. [17]

puṇya|tīrthe kṛtaṃ yena
tapaḥ kv' āpy ati|duṣ|karam,
tasya putro bhaved vaśyaḥ,
saṃṛddho, dhārmikaḥ, su|dhīḥ. [18]

arth'|āgamo, nityam a|rogitā ca,
priyā ca bhāryā, priya|vādinī ca,
vaśyaś ca putro, 'rtha|karī ca vidyā,
śaj jīva|lokasya sukhāni, rājan. [19]

ko dhanyo bahubhiḥ putraiḥ kuśul'|āpūraṇ'|ādhakaiḥ?
varam ekaḥ kul'|ālambī yatra viśrūyate pitā. [20]

PROLOGUE

He whose birth brings higher status to his family has been rightly born. In this ever-revolving transmigration, who is not ordinarily reborn after death?

If a woman can be called a mother even when she has given birth to a son who cannot be counted among the virtuous,* then tell me, whom can you call a barren woman? One who does not distinguish himself by his generosity, asceticism, heroism, learning or wealth is nothing more than his mother's excrement.

Furthermore,

0.20

Better to have a single virtuous son than a hundred fools! One moon destroys darkness, but not even a multitude of stars can do so.

A man who practices strict asceticism in a holy place will have a son who is obedient, prosperous, virtuous and wise.

A large income, perpetual health, a wife who is dear and who speaks pleasantly, an obedient son and money-making know-how—these six are the sources of happiness in this world, O king.

Who is fortunate to have many sons, if they are like measures of grain that fill up the store-house? It is better to have only one who maintains his family and makes his father famous.

o.25 ṛṇa|kartā pitā śatrur, mātā ca vyabhicāriṇī,
bhāryā rūpavatī śatruḥ, putraḥ śatrur a|paṇḍitaḥ. [21]

an|abhyāse viṣaṃ vidyā, ajīrṇe bhojanaṃ viṣaṃ,
viṣaṃ sabhā daridrasya, vṛddhasya taruṇī viṣaṃ. [22]

yasya kasya prasūto 'pi
guṇavān pūjyate naraḥ
dhanur vaṃśa|viśuddho 'pi
nir|guṇaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati? [23]

hā hā putraka, n' ādhītaṃ, su|gat', āitāsu rātriṣu;
tena tvaṃ viduṣāṃ madhye paṅke gaur iva sīdasi. [24]

tat katham idānīm ete mama putrā guṇavantaḥ kriyan-
tām? yataḥ,

o.30 āhāra|nidrā|bhaya|maithunaṃ ca—
sāmānyam etat paśubhir narāṇām.
dharmo hi teṣāṃ adhiko viśeṣo;
dharmaṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ. [25]

dharm'|ārtha|kāma|mokṣāṇām
yasy' āiko 'pi na vidyate,
ajā|gala|stanasy' ēva
tasya janma nir|arthakam. [26]

PROLOGUE

A father who incurs debts is an enemy, as is an adulterous mother; a beautiful wife is an enemy, and so is an unlettered son. 0.25

Knowledge is poison if it is not maintained by assiduous study,* food is poison in the case of indigestion, a large gathering is poison for a poor man, and a young wife is poison for an old husband.

A man of merit, even if he is not of noble descent, is honored. *What is the use of a bow without its string, even if it is made of pure bamboo?: What can a man without merits do, even if he is of pure warrior descent?**

Alas, my child, you have led an easy life, not studying all these nights; so now, when you are in the company of learned people, you will be stuck like a cow in mud.

Now how could I transform my sons into men of merit?
For,

Eating, sleeping, feeling afraid and copulating—these things men have in common with animals. But man distinguishes himself by doing his duties; those who neglect them are like beasts. 0.30

The birth of a person who does not succeed even in one of the four life-aims—to fulfill one's duties, obtain riches, satisfy one's desires or attain final release—is as useless as a nipple on a nanny-goat's neck.

yac c' ôcyate—

āyuh, karma ca, vittam ca,
 vidyā, nidhanam eva ca—
 pañc' âitāny api sṛjyante
 garbha|sthasy' âiva dehinaḥ. [27]

kiṃ ca,

o.35 avaśyam|bhāvino bhāvā
 bhavanti mahatām api:
 nagnatvaṃ Nīla|kaṅṭhasya,
 mah"âhi|śayanam Hareḥ. [28]

api ca,

yad a|bhāvi na tad bhāvi, bhāvi cen na tad anyathā.
 iti cintā|viṣa|ghno 'yam agadaḥ kiṃ na pīyate? [29]

etat kāry'â|kṣamāṇām keṣām cid ālasya|vacanam.

na daivam api saṃcintya tyajed udyogam ātmanaḥ;
 an|udyogena tailāni tilebhyo n' āptum arhati. [30]

o.40 anyac ca,

udyoginaṃ puruṣa|siṃham upaiti Lakṣmīr;
 «daivena deyam» iti kāpuruṣā vadanti.
 daivam nihatya kuru pauruṣam ātma|śaktyā;
 yatne kṛte yadi na sidhyati, ko 'tra doṣaḥ? [31]

PROLOGUE

And it is also said:

One's life-span, deeds, wealth, knowledge and the moment when one dies—these five are already determined for a mortal when he is in his mother's womb.

Moreover,

What is destined to take place does take place, even for the great: Shiva, the blue-necked god, cannot help but be naked, and Vishnu has to lie on an enormous snake. 0.35

Furthermore,

What is not to happen will never happen, and what has to happen will not be otherwise. Why don't you use this as an antidote against the poison of worry?

Some people, unable to act, say such words to justify their idleness. However,

One should not give up one's efforts, even when acknowledging the role of fate; without effort, one cannot obtain oil from sesame seeds.

And there is another verse on this: 0.40

Fortune gravitates towards eminent men who work hard; only cowards say it depends on fate. Forget about fate and be a man—use your strength! Then, if you don't succeed in spite of your efforts, what is there to blame?

yathā hy ekena cakreṇa na rathasya gatih bhavet,
evam puruṣa|kāreṇa vinā daivam na sidhyati. [32]

tathā ca,

pūrva|janma|kṛtaṃ karma tad «daivam» iti kathyate.
tasmāt puruṣa|kāreṇa yatnaṃ kuryād a|tandritaḥ. [33]

o.45 yathā mṛt|piṇḍataḥ kartā kurute yad yad icchati,
evam ātma|kṛtaṃ karma mānavaḥ pratipadyate. [34]

kākatāliyavat prāptaṃ dṛṣṭv' āpi nidhim agrataḥ
na svayaṃ daivam ādatte: puruṣ'ārtham apekṣate. [35]

udyamena hi sidhyanti kāryāṇi, na mano|rathaiḥ:
na hi suptasya siṃhasya praviśanti mukhe mṛgāḥ. [36]

mātā|pitṛ|kṛt'ābhyāso guṇitām eti bālakaḥ,
na garbha|cyuti|mātreṇa putro bhavati paṇḍitaḥ. [37]

mātā śatruḥ pitā vairī
yena bālo na pāṭhitaḥ.
na śobhate sabhā|madhye
haṃsa|madhye bako yathā. [38]

o.50 rūpa|yauvana|sampannā viśāla|kula|sambhavāḥ
vidyā|hīnā na śobhante—nir|gandhā iva kiṃśukāḥ. [39]

PROLOGUE

Just as a cart cannot move forward on one wheel, so fate itself cannot be fulfilled without human effort.

And in the same way,

“Fate” is the karma one accumulated in a previous life. That’s why one should exert oneself in manly activity, tirelessly.

Just as a potter fashions whatever he likes out of a lump of clay, the karma a man encounters is what he created for himself.

0.45

Even if you unexpectedly come across treasure in front of you, fate itself does not pick it up; that needs human effort.

Desired outcomes are achieved through effort alone, not through mere wishes; for gazelles don’t rush into the mouth of a sleeping lion.

A child becomes accomplished if his parents educate him. A son does not become learned just by dropping from the womb.

A mother and a father who do not educate their son are his enemies, for he won’t shine in public—he will be like a crane among swans!

Men who are handsome, young and well-born will not excel without knowledge—they are like *kinshuka* flowers, which have no scent.

0.50

mūrkho 'pi śobhate tāvat
 sabhāyāṃ vastra|veṣṭitaḥ—
 tāvac ca śobhate mūrkho
 yāvat kiṃ cin na bhāṣate.» [40]

etac cintayitvā, sa rājā paṇḍita|sabhāṃ kāritavān. rāj' ōvā-
 ca: «bho bhoḥ paṇḍitāḥ, śrūyatām. asti kaś cid evam|bhūto
 vidvān yo mama putrāṇāṃ nityam un|mārga|gāminām an|
 adhigata|śāstrāṇām idānīm nīti|śāstr'ôpadeśena punar|jan-
 ma kārayituṃ samarthaḥ? yataḥ,

kācaḥ kāñcana|saṃsargād dhatte mārakatīm dyutim;
 tathā sat|saṃnidhānena mūrkho yāti pravīṇatām. [41]

uktaṃ ca,

0.55 hīyate hi matis, tāta, hīnaiḥ saha samāgamāt,
 samaiś ca samatām eti, viśiṣṭaiś ca viśiṣṭatām.» [42]

atr' ântare Viṣṇuśarma|nāmā mahā|paṇḍitaḥ sakala|nīti|
 śāstra|tattva|jñō Bṛhaspatir iv' âbravīt: «deva, mahā|kula|sa-
 mbhūtā ete rāja|putrāḥ. tan mayā nītiṃ grāhayituṃ śakya-
 nte. yataḥ,

n' â|dravye nihitā kā cit kriyā phalavatī bhavet;
 na vyāpāra|śaten' âpi śukavat pāṭhyate bakāḥ. [43]

PROLOGUE

Even an idiot can appear distinguished in an assembly if he wears the appropriate clothes, but he will remain so only as long as he does not say a word.”

Prompted by these thoughts, the king summoned an assembly of learned men. He then asked: “O learned scholars, listen, is there a wise man among you who could teach my ignorant and perpetually wayward sons the science of political ethics and thus give them a new birth, as it were? For,

When a piece of glass is set in gold, it takes on an emerald luster; in the same way, if a fool remains in the company of the wise, he will become clever.

And it is also said:

Dear friend, one’s intelligence diminishes in the company of inferior intellects, it remains the same if one is with equals and improves in the company of superior minds.” 0.55

Thereupon a great scholar called Vishnu-sharman, who knew all the learned works on statecraft very well and was like Brihas-pati* himself, spoke: “Your Majesty, these princes come from a distinguished family, so they could be taught good governance, and I am ready to instruct them. For,

No action can bear fruit if it is performed on an inappropriate object; a crane cannot be taught to speak like a parrot, even after a hundred exercises.

anyac ca,

asmim̐s tu nir|guṇaṃ gotre n' âpatyam upajāyate;
ākare padmarāgāṇāṃ janma kāca|maṇeḥ kutaḥ? [44]

o.60 ato 'haṃ ṣaṇ|mās'|âbhyantare tava putrān nīti|śāstr'|âbhi-
jñān kariṣyāmi.» rājā sa|vinayaṃ punar uvāca:

«kīṭo 'pi su|manaḥ|saṅgād ārohati satāṃ śiraḥ.
āsm" âpi yāti devatvaṃ mahadbhiḥ su|pratiṣṭhitaḥ. [45]

anyac ca,

yath" Ôdaya|girer dravyaṃ saṃnikarṣeṇa dīpyate
tathā sat|saṃnidhānena hīna|varṇo 'pi dīpyate [46]

guṇā guṇa|jñeṣu guṇā bhavanti,
te nir|guṇaṃ prāpya bhavanti doṣāḥ.
āsvādya|toyāḥ prabhavanti nadyaḥ,
samudram āsādya bhavanty a|peyāḥ. [47]

o.65 tad eteṣāṃ asmat|putrāṇāṃ nīti|śāstr'|ôpadeśāya bhavan-
taḥ pramāṇam.» ity uktvā tasya Viṣṇuśarmaṇo bahu|māna|
puraḥ|saram putrān samarpitavān.

PROLOGUE

What is more,

In this family, no child could be born without merits;
how could a mine of rubies produce a shard of glass?

Therefore I shall transform your sons into experts on statecraft within six months.” The king replied politely: 0.60

“Even an insect can climb up good people’s heads by sticking to the flowers they wear. Even a stone can become a god if it is consecrated by the great.

Furthermore,

Just as objects on the Eastern Mountain shine because of their proximity to the rising sun, so too can a person of low rank shine if he is close to good folk.

Good qualities remain good qualities in those who appreciate them, but become faults in a person of no merit. River water tastes good at its source, but when it reaches the ocean it becomes undrinkable.

Therefore I give you a free hand in teaching my sons the science of politics.” And with these words he paid his respect to Vishnu-sharman and entrusted to him his sons. 0.65



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Here translated together for the first time, *FRIENDLY ADVICE* and *KING VIKRAMA'S ADVENTURES* both provide instruction for monarchs in the form of amusing tales. Although from different periods, both were redacted after the seventh century CE, while their stories must date from far earlier. These timeless works are ideal for beginners in Sanskrit.

क्रे

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